



# State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF FORESTRY, FIRE AND STATE LANDS

Michael O. Leavitt  
Governor  
Robert L. Morgan  
Executive Director  
A. Joel Frandsen  
State Forester/Director

1594 West North Temple, Suite 3520  
PO Box 145703  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5703  
801-538-5555  
801-533-4111 (Fax)

## NEWS RELEASE

November 6, 2002

Contact: Jim Springer (801) 538-5324

### WASHINGTON COUNTY FIRE WARDEN HONORED

The Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands has selected Washington County Fire Warden Bill Murphy as "2002 Fire Warden of the Year." County fire wardens work closely with county commissioners, local fire departments, and residents in safeguarding communities from the ravages of wildland fire.

"County fire wardens are the unsung heroes of wildland firefighting," stressed State Forester Joel Frandsen. "Of the nearly one-thousand fires occurring in Utah each year, fire wardens manage to control the vast majority of them in initial attack before they have the chance to grow into big fires."

The 2002 wildland fire season was particularly difficult throughout southern Utah due to the effects of a prolonged drought. The first major fire of the season occurred on March 23, the earliest fire in recorded history. More than 200 acres burned within the city limits of Washington City, damaging several homes, and requiring the use of air-tankers to control. Without Murphy's timely action and levelheaded response Washington City would have undoubtedly suffered greater damage.

"Murphy's dedication and professionalism have been noticed by all who work with him," noted Frandsen. "Numerous fire departments in his area have contacted me, as well as the county commission, to praise his work and let me know how valued he is."

Murphy also successfully managed several large fires in southern Utah during the season, including the Big Wash fire. He was the Type-III incident commander on that fire and held the fire in check until a Type-II incident management team could arrive and take control. He then worked tirelessly to check homes in the potential path of the fire and ensured residents and crews were safe.

Frandsen presented Murphy with a plaque during an annual fire warden's meeting held in Park City, Utah.

###